

COMMENT ON THIS AND THAT

Alameda County Medical Society Pioneers in Revamping County Health Center Activities.—The "County Institutions Commission" of Alameda County has been commented upon in these pages. That Commission has rendered excellent service in removing the county hospital and allied activities from the field of civil politics. The board of supervisors of that county, through Ordinance No. 250 which was passed on August 23 last, placed the medical care of the "indigent sick" and "dependent poor" under the Alameda County Institutions Commission, which body in turn adopted definitions to indicate what classes of citizens in Alameda County came under either of the above classifications. As a result of the reorganization of the nine health centers maintained in Alameda County, a certain number of former patients of those health centers are no longer admissible for treatment in those institutions because of ineligibility to the "indigent sick" or "dependent poor" classes. The problem was therefore to find ways and means of giving medical care to these citizens who were not paupers, but whose incomes were quite limited. The Alameda County Medical Society stepped into the breach and made possible the proper care of this group of citizens. For details of the plan which the Alameda County Medical Society proposed, see articles by Doctors Black and Crosby in this issue, pages 330 and 354.

A concluding paragraph from a communication in which the plan was discussed by Dr. B. W. Black of Oakland, who is Medical Director of the Alameda County Institutions Commission, may be here quoted:

"The physicians, the dentists, and the druggists are working harmoniously with Alameda County in joint efforts to solve this problem. As it nears solution, the plan presents the answer to many of the difficulties which now beset the practice of medicine and the county hospitals and clinics filled to capacity with patients unable to pay regular fees"

From the above it may be noted that the three professions which have definite relationships to healing art practice, are here working hand in hand for the best interests of the public health and of their respective groups.

Which is as it should be.

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University Student Health Services.—Publication No. 19 of the Committee on Costs of Medical Care has as its title "University Student Health Services." Four state universities—Michigan, Minnesota, California and Oregon State Agricultural College—are used as the basis for the study. The health services at Yale and Cornell were also surveyed. These six institutions give health services to a total of about 40,000 students. Twelve pages of the volume are allocated to a consideration of the health services of the University of California. The costs for the health services in these six institutions of higher learning range

from \$10 to \$34 a college year. Readers of this journal may be interested in the following excerpt:

"Important facts revealed by the study of the six university student health services include the following:

"1. Per capita costs for 250 days of operation in the six universities studied range from less than \$10 at the Oregon State Agricultural College to approximately \$34 at Yale University. Fees paid by the students ranged from \$9 a school year to \$20.

"2. Students' fees entitled them to receive widely different types of service, ranging from a preliminary medical examination on entrance, supplemented by counsel and advice by a general practitioner in cases of ambulatory illness, to thorough periodic examinations, correction of physical defects, hospitalization, and surgery.

"3. Because of emphasis upon health examinations, the directors and personnel of these services were in a position to concentrate their efforts upon preventive medicine and the early discovery of disease and defects rather than upon remedial measures required to relieve advanced pathological conditions.

"4. Student health services provided for physicians on the staff the best of modern diagnostic and therapeutic facilities."

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Uniform Narcotic Laws.—A Universal Service press dispatch of September 9 refers to a Washington, D. C., report on some 600 physicians in the United States who are narcotic addicts. We quote a brief excerpt:

"In a drive to rid the medical profession of unscrupulous practitioners, Harry J. Anslinger, federal narcotics commissioner, has reported 672 cases of state medical boards for prosecution. The result was negligible."

The inference of the press dispatch was that medical and pharmacy boards were negligent in not depriving such narcotic addicts of licenses to practice.

Those who are familiar with medical practice acts and the difficulties which state medical boards encounter with the courts—when state board trials to deprive physicians of licenses for offenses against medical practice acts are not punctiliously observant of legal procedures—do not wonder that only a limited number of offenders are deprived of their licenses. It is hoped that the proposed standard narcotic law for states, which will be included in the report of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, and which will shortly come off the press, will be worded so that it will commend itself to the different commonwealths and be generally adopted. It may not be out of place to consider such a redraft for possible submission to the California Legislature which will convene on January 3, 1933.

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A Naturopathic State Examining Board for California?—The complexion of the next California legislature will probably be known by the time this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE is placed in the mails. In the editor's opinion it would not be amiss if all members of the California Medical Association who have personal acquaintance with successful legislative candidates would write congratulations to such friends. No

one can foretell what may take place in a legislative session. The greater the number of kindly contacts maintained by California Medical Association members with legislators, the more assurance that in the defense of sound public health standards we will have supporters in the legislative halls. Let no one think that the coming session will not produce its usual quota of bills designed to lower public health and professional standards. In all probability a number of new groups of sectarians will seek to establish themselves with state recognition, by means of special sectarian practice acts and examining boards. An excerpt from a letter bearing on a proposed law that would recognize the expression of cultist medicine known as "naturopathy" is printed below and is full of significance as to future possibilities. It reads:

"Hearing from reliable authority that (name), one of the active proponents of the naturopathic bill at the last legislature, is in Southern California interesting supporters in the introduction of the same bill at the 1933 legislature, thought you would be interested in the enclosed copy of a letter addressed to the New Jersey State Board of Medical Examiners inquiring about the 'First National University of Naturopathy and Allied Sciences, Inc.' the 'genealogy' of which is most complicated." . . .

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Research Worker Ill from Typhus.—In the last three issues of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE was printed a series of letters from the late Joseph W. Cook, who died from typhus fever in Persia. The tragedy of this former member of the California Medical Association, who was so willing to risk his life in service to almost forgotten fellow humans in a far-away land, was recalled by a recent news dispatch which stated that Dr. R. E. Dyer of the National Institute of Health of the United States was seriously ill from typhus, contracted in his work of trying to find a means of overcoming that much dreaded disease. The medical profession may be proud of sons who, as they pursue their work of service, so willingly face the dangers of death. For those who missed the dispatch at the time, it is here reproduced.

Victim of Typhus Lets Fleas Bite Him to Aid Science

By International News Service

Washington, October 7.—Dr. R. E. Dyer of the National Institute of Health remained seriously ill of endemic typhus fever today while fleas were exposed to the blood of the stricken research worker.

Doctor Dyer, it is believed by officials of the United States Health Service, became infected from a flea bite while conducting experiments with forms of European typhus or "jail fever." The scientist's recovery is confidently predicted.

The fleas that now feed on Doctor Dyer will next be allowed to bite guinea pigs. If the animals develop typhus, the experiment will prove that fleas can transmit the disease to humans.

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Patents on Therapeutic Preparations.—It is generally known that some of the net proceeds accruing from the production of insulin go to one of the medical schools of Canada. It has been stated that if Professor Babcock, who invented a

milk separator, had taken out a patent on his invention, the wide use of that separator would have meant a large annual income to the university with which he was connected. In recent years a number of research investigators have seen fit to take out patents on their discoveries; one, to insure the integrity and standards of their special products; and two, to permit some of the net proceeds to go to the support of research and study work. Not many years ago such a course of action would have been severely criticized. A recent medical discovery for which a patent has been applied is mentioned in the dispatch below. The preparation will no doubt have considerable therapeutic interest to many physicians. News dispatch follows:

NEW CURE FOR ANEMIA PATENTED

Wisconsin Professor Finds Copper Aid to Iron as a Disease Remedy

Madison (Wis.), Oct. 20. (AP)—A broad general patent has been granted to Prof. Edwin B. Hart of the University of Wisconsin department of agricultural chemistry, on the discovery that copper, when added to iron in proper proportions, results in a compound which prevents and helps cure certain forms of anemia. The patent has been assigned to the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation.

This was announced by Dr. Harry L. Russell of the Foundation, who said that Professor Hart had made his discovery in 1928 after three years of research. Application for patents have been pending since that time.

Doctor Russell said it had been found that the administration of copper and iron together increased the hemoglobin content in the blood from 64 to 84 per cent after four weeks in one hundred cases of secondary anemia in children who were patients in a New York hospital.

Iron, he added, has long been accepted as beneficial in some cases of anemia, but that Professor Hart had learned that copper is required as a catalytic agent.

California State Supreme Court Decision Regarding Practice of Dentistry by a Corporation.—An important decision was recently handed down by the highest court in California, in which the denial of a corporation to practice a healing art profession was affirmed. Because of its medico-legal significance and because it is desirable that the opinion should be accessible in the medical literature, the editor is printing a substantial portion of this opinion. (See this issue, page 349.)

The court's opinion, in which all justices but one concurred, should be read by physicians who wish to acquaint themselves with the legal substratum underlying police laws such as medical and dental practice acts. For all intents and purposes, members of the dental profession are physicians specializing in diseases of the oral cavity. It is regrettable that when the practice of dentistry took on its present-day scientific form, that this group of professional colleagues should not have been made a more integral part of organized medicine. However, as time goes on and new studies constantly reveal how closely related are oral hygiene and diseases to other malfunctions and malstructures of the human body, members of the professions of medicine and dentistry are being brought more and more together.

The organized dental profession has a code of ethics very much like that of medicine. It is true that there are no dental cults such as are found in medicine, but the advertising evils are perhaps more pronounced, and the danger from over-ambitious nonprofessional technical assistants also probably are greater. The digest of this Supreme Court decision makes excellent reading, especially in conjunction with previous articles in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, such as Judge Blake's decision in the Superior Court at Los Angeles in the Medical Service Corporation case. (See CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE of November, 1930, page 846, and May, 1932, page 353.)

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Psittacosis.—The September CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE (page 194) contained a report of a case of psittacosis in San Luis Obispo County. A number of deaths from that infection have taken place in California. The disease has a high mortality. Perhaps on that account, and because so much is still to be learned concerning its capacity to spread, the United States Public Health Service has seen proper to request the President of the United States to place an embargo on the importation of birds of the parrot family. The California State Board of Health has issued an order forbidding the transportation of parrots from one aviary to another. In other words, California has placed a nominal quarantine on birds of the parrot family, leaving to local health officers the responsibility to see that the ruling is observed. Psittacosis is a somewhat new disease, so far as the American public is concerned. It is understandable, therefore, to read that pet dealer associations have passed resolutions protesting against the state health board orders. In the Miscellany column of the current number of this journal may be found copies of President Hoover's order and other information. (See page 355.)

Soviet Russia's Public Health in the Second Five-Year Plan.—The first five-year plan will be finished for the most part in 1932, a year earlier than originally proposed. The government of the Soviet Union is working out a scheme for the second five-year plan of public economics, industry, and culture. Its principal aim is the formation of a socialistic society without classes in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. On the basis of the general increase of public incomes that are wholly used for the needs of the working masses, a sharp rise of their prosperity must be obtained. A complex scheme of health direction has been adopted, transforming labor into a source of physical and creative energy. It corresponds to measures used for progress in the allied field of public economics—communal housing, public nutrition, general education, and changing of the mode of living according to socialistic principles. Thus a social foundation for the future society without class distinctions is accomplished.

The following points are of a great significance in the hygienic supervision of labor: mechanization and electrification of industry on the basis of technical reconstruction, and the wide use of means of production in order to protect the health and strength of workers. Living conditions in cities will be made healthful with the view of turning the latter into

mighty labor collectives. These healthful conditions include extension of water supplies and conduits, paving of streets and roads, prevention of noise and street accidents, increasing the number of trees and the amount of verdure in towns and industrial plants, and the abolishment of prostitution in all its varieties. In the socialistic town there will be no place for the development of rheumatism, tuberculosis, venereal diseases or epidemics. The public education of children from the earliest age and the augmentation of living space will help to develop a healthy generation. The difference between the town and the country will disappear. Agricultural labor will improve the health of peasants.

The Soviet farms, machine tractor stations and plants will receive the services of health centers, which will not only give medical and prophylactic aid but also superintend technological processes, creating healthful conditions for labor. Hospital assistance, including ambulances, consultations and polyclinics, as a means for preventing morbidity and invalidity, will embrace all the industrial proletariat and peasants.

The second five-year plan of public health must completely abolish industrial accidents. There will be an end to most of the so-called social diseases—typhus fever, typhoid, remittent typhoid, variola, trachoma, malaria, scabies, favus and, partially, syphilis. A barrier will be placed against the dissemination of tuberculosis. Children's diseases will decrease. More nurseries for all children will be constructed. Women will stay before and after delivery in special houses for the mother and child. In the schools, athletics and gymnastics will play a large part in preparing a healthy generation. The leisure hours of industrial workers and peasants must not be spent in idleness and boredom but in conditions leading to further improvement of their mental and physical strength. The correct organization of leisure time in plants and in homes has great significance in raising the efficiency of labor. Out of town camps and parks for culture and rest, with active forms of amusement, must be widely spread. Travel, as a most effective dynamic form of rest, giving to the worker a knowledge of his own country, will take the place of houses of rest existing at present. Physical culture, sports and athletics will be encouraged.

The medical staff will consist of the physician and the physician's assistant. The latter will help in the prompt solution of problems of organization, and the physicians will be able to pass over to their assistants various small procedures which take at present much of the physician's time. The medical staff must be well acquainted with the technique and organization of the industries in the region where they work. Workers in their everyday activity will help to realize large health measures that are carried out now only by the medical staff.

An all-union conference on the questions of planning public health in the second five-year plan is now being held in Moscow. A detailed report of it will be given later.—*Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 99, No. 4.

A Code for Professional Men.—The Toledo Academy of Medicine Bulletin for November carried the following paragraph, attributed to Hon. Charles E. Dawes: "If you work in a profession, in heaven's name work for it. If you live by a profession, live for it. Help advance your co-worker. Respect the great power that protects you, that surrounds you with the advantages of organization, and that makes it possible for you to achieve results. Speak well for it. Stand for it. Stand for its professional supremacy. If you must obstruct or decry those who strive to help, why—quit the profession. But as long as you are a part of a profession, do not belittle it. If you do, you are loosening the tendrils that hold you to it, and with the first high wind that comes along, you will be uprooted and blown away and probably you will never know why."